

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.227
26 August 1965
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 26 August 1965, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

(Ethiopia)

OF MICHIGAN

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COLLECTION

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A. CORREA do LAGO
Mr. D. SILVEIRA da MOTA

Bulgaria:

Mr. C. LUKANOV
Mr. Y. GOLEMANOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV

Burma:

U SAIN BWA
U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. J.A. BEESLEY
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. P.D. LEE

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. Z. CERNIK
Mr. V. VAJNAH
Mr. R. KLEIN
Mr. F. DOBIAS

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Mr. T. BEKELE

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. K.P. LUKOSE

Italy:

Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. E. GUIDOTTI
Mr. S. AVETTA
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (Cont'd)

Mexico:

Mr. A. GOMEZ ROBLEDO

Mr. M. TELLO MACIAS

Nigeria:

Mr. L.C.N. OBI

Mr. O.O. ODESOLA

Poland:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT

Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Mr. A. SKOWRONSKI

Mr. H. PAC

Romania:

Mr. V. DUMITRESCU

Mr. E. GLASER

Mr. C. UNGUREANU

Mr. I. MINZATU

Sweden:

Mr. P. LIND

Mr. P. HAMMARSKJOLD

Mr. B. VEGESACK

Mr. J. PRAWITZ

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. S.K. TSARAPKIN

Mr. Y.M. VORONTSOV

Mr. G.K. EFIMOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. A.F. HASSAN

Mr. A. OSMAN

Mr. M. KASSEM

Mr. S. IBRAHIM

United Kingdom:

Lord CHALFONT

Sir Harold BEELEY

Mr. J.G. TAHOURDIN

Miss E.J.M. RICHARDSON

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (Cont'd)

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER

Mr. A. AKALOVSKY

Mr. D.S. MACDONALD

Mr. P.S. BRIDGES

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

The CHAIRMAN (Ethiopia): I declare open the two hundred and twenty-seventh plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

U SAIN BWA (Burma): Before going into the substance of my statement today I should like to say that, speaking after many of our colleagues have already spoken, the delegation of Burma has had the benefit of pondering over the various views expounded by all sides since this session began over four weeks ago. We have heard thoughtful and convincing statements which have given us much insight into the problems that lie ahead for us to solve. Since this is the first time that my delegation has spoken during this session, I wish to emphasize that our views will be more or less general in nature. Later, if time and circumstances permit, we shall perhaps take the opportunity of elaborating our thoughts in greater detail.

I do not wish to begin by striking a note of pessimism but, the international situation being what it is, I am compelled to state that the climate in which we meet is by no means cheerful. The sombre clouds of war and international tension which hover above us are casting a gloomy shadow over this Conference. For this reason it is necessary for us to make every effort to work towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, which is the main task entrusted to us. At the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that our progress here depends very much upon developments outside this Conference. It is important, therefore, not to forget that we cannot carry on our work in isolation and that developments outside this Conference can affect it. If progress is to be achieved we must also try to overcome obstacles that hinder our work here.

The decision by the two co-Chairmen to continue our negotiations here is indeed a manifestation of their sincere desire to continue to strive towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, even through difficult times; and we are grateful for that. But I must say in all sincerity that, despite efforts being made by all sides, the progress of our work leaves much to be desired. No doubt some achievements have been made in certain fields, and this gives us a glimmer of hope. However, we should not ignore the fact that time is not on our side, and my delegation would like to remind the Committee again that delay in timely and substantial progress will keep us far from the goal towards which we have embarked.

(U Sain Bwa, Burma)

The Disarmament Commission, which was reconvened at the initiative of the Soviet Union in April of this year in New York, adopted two very important resolutions which have given us useful guidelines for our future activities. I refer, of course, to resolutions DC/224 and DC/225 (ENDC/149) adopted by the Disarmament Commission.

Resolution DC/224, which recommends the United Nations General Assembly to give urgent consideration to the convening of a world disarmament conference, in accordance with the proposal adopted at the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries held in Cairo in October last year (A/5763, pp. 23, 24), acknowledges that disarmament is the concern of all the countries of the world. We are of opinion that, while the smaller nations should try to facilitate negotiations among the major Powers of the world, the primary responsibility for initiating and conducting those negotiations must lie with the major Powers themselves. To have a truly effective and meaningful discussion on disarmament it is essential to have a full representation of all the major armed Powers of the world. We would therefore stress the importance of the participation also of the People's Republic of China and France in such a conference.

I should now like to add the voice of the delegation of Burma to the voices of other non-aligned delegations on the need for focussing the scope of our discussions on finding ways and means to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and for the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We sincerely believe that those two items are crying out for early solution. I need hardly say, however, that nothing whatsoever should inhibit the discussion of any item which other delegations may wish to discuss. There is in fact a host of proposals suggested by other delegations whose urgency and importance we do not underrate; but we, for our part, feel that we could best contribute to the work here by concentrating our statement on these two very important issues.

The delegation of Burma, like so many others whose representatives have spoken previously, believes that one of the most pressing issues that we have to tackle is how to stop the further spread of nuclear weapons. Representatives of the nuclear Powers have warned us that the time left to us might be measured

(U Sain Bwa, Burma)

in terms of months rather than of years. We do not in the least cast any doubts on these warnings, but we do hope that the obstacles standing between them in the way of solving this problem will be overcome, for they have many points in common for its solution. Needless to say, however, when we talk about an agreement on non-dissemination there are considerations other than simply the smoothing out of differences between the two super-Powers. This problem has many sides, and the interests of the international community as a whole have to be taken into account.

The conception of non-dissemination as it affects the existing nuclear Powers and other countries of the world is that it should not be a means for the former to maintain for ever their present status in the nuclear club and to prevent the admission of new members. We have heard the nuclear Powers say that it will not be, and we are comforted by their words. The prospect that there are now some more countries capable of producing their own nuclear weapons has introduced dangerous new elements which undermine the interests of international security.

Just as there are many facets to this problem, so a range of measures has been suggested by various delegations. Each of those measures is indeed very desirable in itself, and it would appear to us that if the linking of two or more measures could serve to facilitate the solution of the problem as a whole, then we should by all means attempt to link them. On the other hand, if the linking of measures should act as an impediment, then of course it would be preferable not to complicate matters. It is also our feeling that the finding of solutions for measures which offer prospects of agreement should not necessarily await solutions for other measures offering less promise of early achievement.

(U Sain Bwa, Burma)

I now wish to comment briefly on the presentation by the Western delegations of a draft treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons (ENDC/152). We shall, of course, need more time to study its contents carefully; but now that one side has set out its position in the form of a draft treaty we hope that it will provide a stimulus to our discussions on this very important item. We have heard representatives of the Western Powers say that they are amenable to comments and suggestions on their draft treaty, and that should facilitate our negotiations.

In conclusion, we should like to comment on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, which to us is just as important as the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons. At our 221st meeting we had the occasion to mark the second anniversary of the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1) signed in Moscow. We have always hoped that that partial measure would lead to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, as we see the danger of leaving the limited Treaty to fend for itself. Two years have passed, and time has only strengthened our conviction that whatever gains have been made should be further consolidated, not only for their own sake but also because we fear the undesirable effect it would have on disarmament as a whole if we were not to make further progress in the area where the differences between the two sides are narrowest.

It is therefore more urgent than ever for the nuclear Powers to close the remaining gap, and we venture to suggest again the desirability of reviving the Sub-Committee on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests. To begin with, the Sub-Committee might explore the possibility of extending the scope of the Moscow Treaty to include underground tests above a certain threshold to be jointly defined as capable of identification by national control systems, on the lines suggested by the representative of Brazil (ENDC/PV.177, pp. 9, 10; PV.224, pp.15, 16). We believe that such action could pave the way for agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Mr. CAVALLETTI (Italy)(translation from French): The draft treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons which was submitted on 17 August by the United States delegation (ENDC/152) has already been clearly explained in detail by the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. As is known, this draft is the result of co-operation between the four Western delegations, each of which has contributed ideas and suggestions; and it is solidly supported by all four.

(Mr. Cavalletti, Italy)

Today my delegation would like to discuss certain aspects of the treaty which, in our opinion, merit particular attention, while at the same time trying to avoid repetition of the points of view already put forward by my colleagues and fully shared by us.

Thus I should like to deal very briefly with three points and, from this examination, make clear our position on the problem as a whole. Those points are as follows: first of all, the importance and urgency of such a treaty; secondly, the connexion between non-dissemination and other measures of nuclear disarmament; and, thirdly, the correspondence of the provisions of the treaty with the requirements of non-dissemination.

There is no need for me to explain at length how much importance the Italian delegation attaches to the need to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. All the statements my delegation has made, either in the United Nations or here, have reaffirmed the extreme importance of putting a brake on the spread and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The increase in the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons and exercising national control over them gives rise to ever-growing dangers. We know the sense of responsibility which the major Powers have displayed in times of danger. The so-called "hot line" those countries have installed for the purpose of communication between them (ENDC/97) adds an element of security in the event of a crisis, but these limitations and these safeguards will be frittered away if the spread of nuclear weapons increases.

We have often spoken here of the risk of an outbreak of war by accident. Unfortunately this risk already exists, but naturally it would be aggravated if the number of countries having the power to start a nuclear war were increased.

The situation was already sufficiently grave last year. The explosion of the Chinese bomb last autumn has made it even more serious. That event has given rise to new problems and has rendered even more urgent and acute the problems that already exist. The countries in the vicinity of China have good reason to feel threatened. Although India has decided not to equip itself with nuclear weapons, it cannot fail to be concerned about its own security. Other reasons for disquiet may arise and, by a chain reaction, bring about a disastrous nuclear weapons race between smaller or relatively smaller countries. That would be not only very dangerous to peace and the stability of the world situation, but also ruinous for the economies of those countries, whose entire resources should be devoted to the vital needs of their economic and social recovery and progress.

(Mr. Cavalletti, Italy)

This fact stresses not only the importance but also the extreme urgency of concluding a general treaty on non-dissemination. In this field we are coming dangerously close to the point of no return. It is absolutely essential that we should not go beyond that point. All peace-loving countries must unite in order to erect a rampart against this increasing danger.

It was particularly because we realize the urgency of this situation that my delegation collaborated in the drawing up of the draft treaty which has been submitted to you. I am not unaware that many delegations here envisage a non-dissemination treaty as only one element of a broader agreement covering several elements of nuclear disarmament, in particular the prohibition of nuclear tests, the stopping of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes and of nuclear weapon vehicles, and the destruction, at least in part, of certain nuclear weapons. Others believe that renunciation of nuclear weapons should be accompanied by certain guarantees by the countries possessing such weapons against possible nuclear aggression.

We also share the view that an agreement on non-dissemination should not remain an isolated fact but should be the beginning of a process of nuclear disarmament in which the nuclear Powers should participate through the adoption of concerted measures designed to stop building up and to reduce their own arsenals. That is the idea underlying Mr. Fanfani's proposal for a nuclear moratorium. As Mr. Fanfani said in his statement of 29 July, it is conceivable that the non-nuclear countries might renounce equipping themselves with nuclear weapons for a specific length of time (ENDC/PV.219, p. 18) in order to encourage the nuclear countries to reach agreement during that time-limit on non-dissemination and on the most urgent and necessary measures of nuclear disarmament. As you see, the concern manifested here by the delegations of India, Sweden and the United Arab Republic is ever present in our mind; but for our part it is the criterion of urgency which for the moment outweighs all other considerations.

If a broad and comprehensive treaty on non-dissemination, including also a commitment in regard to other measures of nuclear disarmament, had been proposed, the Committee would have had to undertake negotiations which inevitably would have been long and difficult. We have only a very short time at our disposal here. Our desire was to give a preliminary but favourable response to the expectations and appeals of the United Nations. That response could therefore only be a limited one, with the understanding that wider agreements would be elaborated later.

(Mr. Cavalletti, Italy)

In order to meet this immediate requirement it was necessary to submit to the Conference a simple and short draft treaty including the maximum guarantees of non-dissemination so that it might be acceptable to the Soviet Union and receive its support, if the Soviet Union really wants agreement.

By omitting from the text of the treaty any complex measures which would inevitably give rise to controversy concerning balance, by reducing control to a minimum formula, by concentrating the provisions of the treaty on the guarantees required by the Soviet Union, we have tried to make a sincere effort and have gone as far as we could in a serious attempt to arrive at an agreement between the East and the West.

My delegation has already explained (ibid.) the value we attach to the conclusion of an agreement in Geneva at the present time. We hope that the achievement of some measure of agreement here will help to reverse the trend of the international situation and, by increasing mutual confidence, facilitate the search for just and peaceful solutions of the present crises. The stakes are so high that the sacrifice of certain theses or, if you prefer, certain interests seems to us to be worth while, even advisable.

The Italian delegation believes that the improvement in the international situation which would result from the signature, at the present time, of a non-dissemination treaty would be of such importance as to justify every effort at understanding and rapprochement on the part of all. That is why the provisions relating to the crucial point -- namely, that of allowed forms of nuclear co-operation -- have been worded in the strictest manner in order to give the Soviet Union and its allies the guarantees they demand in so far as these are justified

The requirements put forward so far by the Soviet Union and its allies in regard to non-dissemination seem to be of two kinds; they can be interpreted in two ways. The campaign which those countries have waged against the multilateral nuclear force in order to revise and prevent certain forms of co-operation between the Western allies -- that is to say, forms of co-operation which are natural in any alliance whether in the field of conventional armaments or in that of nuclear armaments; co-operation which does not involve dissemination -- and the attacks made by the Soviet Union even against possible forms of simple nuclear consultation between the allies within NATO, could give rise to the suspicion that the aim of the Soviet Union is to create a division between the allies and thus attempt to weaken the defensive power of the Western countries.

(Mr. Cavalletti, Italy)

But the Soviet Union and its allies may equally well have genuine and understandable misgivings at the idea of there appearing on their frontiers a country with nuclear weapons under its own national control -- weapons which it could use on its own authority and without the co-operation of the alliance. That is an hypothesis which we consider to be quite impossible. Nevertheless, we can understand that this impossibility, so clear to us, may not appear so obvious and certain to the Warsaw Pact countries.

On the other hand, if in all objectivity we recognize that the fears of the Eastern countries are understandable, they in their turn should understand our own and appreciate the apprehensions of the countries of Western Europe which are exposed to the constant threat of several hundred nuclear weapon delivery vehicles of intermediate range on the territories of the East. There is no corresponding defensive force installed on the territories of the West.

In the drafting of articles I and II of the treaty, we therefore sought to take the fears of the Eastern countries into account. Articles I and II leave possibilities open for defensive nuclear co-operation between the Western countries but preclude the danger -- feared by the Soviet Union and its allies -- of the establishment of a new national control centre for nuclear weapons close to their frontiers. The problems of the establishment or the form of such co-operation or interdependence are still being studied; but the terms of articles I and II place on those studies strict and clearly-defined limits which cannot be exceeded and which are in line with the views of the Italian Government. My Government has agreed to study these forms of co-operation with its allies, having given our Parliament an undertaking that in no case will it be possible for them to lead to dissemination of nuclear weapons. My Government considers even these systems of interdependence as an appropriate means of avoiding the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our commitments are formal. The Italian delegation has given its support to articles I and II precisely because they confirm and sanction the exact, defined and indivisible aim fixed by the Italian Government.

If the Soviet Union and its allies really want to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons, if their misgivings are sincere and if their polemics are not aimed solely at dividing the Western allies, they should find in the text submitted by the United States delegation the guarantees which they are seeking and which they are entitled to obtain.

(Mr. Cavalletti, Italy)

Therefore in my opinion the draft treaty represents a concrete effort to achieve general agreement on this important problem of non-dissemination. It contains very serious proposals. This is the first time, after such long negotiations, that a text has been placed before the Geneva Conference. It constitutes a flexible and very valuable basis for negotiation.

I hope that on the Soviet side this draft treaty will be examined with the greatest attention and without prejudice. Unfortunately, rumours which are echoed in the Press seem to imply that the Soviet Government is not very favourably predisposed. But the Soviet delegation has not yet stated its views; it has merely put questions. Moreover, the other Eastern delegations have not yet expressed their views either. I hope that this delay for reflection is due to the fact that a serious and thorough examination is under way.

That encourages me to put forward the following idea. The text of so ticklish a treaty does not lend itself easily to analysis. To study it thoroughly it is necessary to embark upon a legal task -- an exegesis carried out jointly in a relaxed, calm and restrained manner. Our speeches in plenary meetings can provide only partial, incomplete explanations. Those explanations will always be limited by the almost formal nature of our debate. Personally, I think that it would be very useful if, while the work of the Committee continued normally, a small study group could be set up. That study group would meet as soon as possible, with the help of legal advisers. It would work in private without verbatim records, and would report back to the Committee at a plenary meeting. It could also submit amendments to the proposed text which would be studied by the Committee at plenary meetings.

In my view it is only in this way, by this thorough and confidential method of work, that it would be possible to obtain complete, frank and considered explanations on a reciprocal basis. The delay by the delegations of the Eastern and non-aligned countries in replying is very understandable and leads me to think that they too might consider the joint and confidential work of which I have just spoken to be desirable and useful.

It is for these reasons that I ventured to put this idea to the Committee.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 227th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Zelleke, representative of Ethiopia.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Burma and of Italy.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 31 August 1965, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.